



Representative Louise M. Slaughter
Representative Diana DeGette
United States Congress

MEMORANDUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT

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TO: Editorial Board Writers and Interested Parties

FR: Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D- NY), Chair, House Rules Committee
Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO), Vice Chair, House Energy and
Commerce Committee

RE: Upcoming Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*: *Prevention First*, a bi-partisan,
pro-choice, pro-life approach to reducing unintended pregnancies and
abortions.

*Thursday, January 22nd marks 36 years since the Supreme Court handed down their
decision in *Roe v. Wade* affirming a woman's right to choose.*

ACTION: On January 13, 2009, U.S. Reps. Louise Slaughter and Diana DeGette, co-chairs of the Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus, joined by Majority Leader Harry Reid in the Senate, introduced the *Prevention First Act*, a bi-partisan, bi-cameral, pro-choice, pro-life comprehensive approach to reducing unintended pregnancies. This common-sense legislation empowers men and women to prevent unintended pregnancies through education and access to contraception.

GOAL: The anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* highlights the important goal of *Prevention First*: to provide medically accurate, science-based information to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and therefore, reduce the need for abortions. For decades, Americans of differing viewpoints have fought in the courts over access to legal abortions. *Prevention First*, however, offers a uniting approach that will reduce unintended pregnancies and promote public health.

Why We Must Put Prevention First

- The United States has one of the highest rates of unintended pregnancies among industrialized nations. Each year 3 million pregnancies - 50 percent of all pregnancies - in the United States are unintended with half of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion.
- In 2000, 34 million American women – half of all women aged 15-44 years – were in need of contraceptive services and supplies to help prevent unintended pregnancy, and half of those were in need of public support for such care. For every \$1 spent on providing family planning services, an estimated \$3.80 is saved in Medicaid expenditures for pregnancy-related and newborn care.
- Each year, publicly funded family planning services help women to prevent an estimated 1.3 million unplanned pregnancies and 630,000 abortions. Yet these programs are struggling to meet the growing demand for subsidized family planning services without corresponding increases in funding.
- A new study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that the nation's teen birth rate has increased for the first time in 15 years. One in three girls in the U.S. becomes pregnant before the age of 20 and 80 percent of these pregnancies are unintended.

Why Americans Can Unite Around Prevention First

- A majority of Americans support access to contraception and view programs that provide greater access to contraception as a more effective method of reducing abortions than enacting more restrictive abortion laws.
- The best way to reduce unintended pregnancies and thus the number of abortions is to prevent them in the first place. The best way to prevent them is to allow women access to contraception. Both pro-life and pro-choice Members of Congress support the *Prevention First* bill, because it is a comprehensive approach to preventing unintended pregnancies and reducing the number of abortions.

What the Prevention First Act Does

- Increase Funding for the National Family Planning Program (Title X).
- Expand Medicaid Family Planning Services.
- End Insurance Discrimination Against Women.
- Improve Awareness about Emergency Contraception.
- Provide Compassionate Assistance for Rape Victims.
- Reduce Teen Pregnancy.
- Ensure that All Federal Programs Provide Medically Accurate Information.

National Journal's *CongressDaily*: Pregnancy Prevention Bill Offered in Both Houses

Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2009

Reps. **Diana DeGette**, D-Colo., and **Louise Slaughter**, D-N.Y., and Senate Majority Leader **Reid** will reintroduce their legislation today aimed at preventing unwanted pregnancies. The bill aims to tackle the problem from several angles, including increasing family planning funding, ending insurance discrimination against women and improving emergency contraception awareness.

"This bill is an attempt to be an omnibus approach at preventing unwanted pregnancies," DeGette said, adding that she has talked with House Energy and Commerce Chairman **Henry Waxman** about the bill and anticipates the panel will hold a hearing on the topic in the next few months.

"If we want to reduce the number of abortions in this country, the methodology is clear -- empower women to prevent unintended pregnancies through education and access to contraception," Slaughter said.

According to the lawmakers, half of pregnancies in the United States are unintended and half of those end in abortion.

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United States House of Representatives
Committee on Rules | Committee on Energy and Commerce